Recommendations of the Working Group on Trading Houses

1645. SHRI TALARI MANOHAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Working Group on Trading Houses has made certain recommendations?

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take on the basis of these recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main recommendations made by the Working Group on Trading Houses included *inter-alia* introduction of a system consisting of three different categories of Export/ Trading firms graded in conical structure, change in eligibility criteria, compulsory exports of six products and to six countries, inclusion of invisible earnings in foreign exchange for calculating export turn-over flexibility in use of REP licences, removal of value ceiling for import of certain goods, easy access to imported inputs for exports, parity in use of MDA funds with Export Promotion Councils, permission to procure long term export promotional loans through M.D.A. or Exim Bank etc.

(c) The recommendations made by the Working Group were duly taken into account while formulating the new Import-Export Policy for 1988-91.

Office hours in Mobile Civil Emergency Force Office

1646. SHRI M. KADHARSHA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the office timings in all the subordinate offices of Central Government are from 0930 hrs. to 1800 hrs. in Delhi;

(b) if so whether the Mobile Civil Emergency Force, a subordinate office of the Ministry, adheres to the prescribed office timings; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Mobile Civil Emergency Force also observes the same timings. However, for some staff like havildars, constables who are required to perform line guard and other emergency duties, even on holidays, the duty period is from 0930 AM to 0430 PM.

Duty-free clearance of life saving equipments

1647. SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that all Custom Houses are permitting duty-free clearance of foley balloon catheters as life saving equipments under Customs Notification No. 208/81;

(b) if so, under which heading and serial number of the said Notification; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, what is the current practice and how large quantity of such goods were released in the past?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The admissibility of Custom duty exemption on Foley Balloon Catheters under Customs Noti-

fication No. 208/81 is pending decision before High Court of Bombay and other Courts. The matter is *subjudice*.

Duty-free clearance of various types of infusion sets

1648. SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that all Custom Houses are permitting duty-free clearance of various types of infusion sets under Customs Notification No. 208|81;

(b) if so, under which heading and serial number of the said Notification; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (c) Butterfly Needle Infusion sets are allowed import free of Custom duty in terms of Customs Notification No. 208/81 under serial No. 44. The admissibility of the duty-free concession for other types of infusion sets is subjudice before the Bombay High Court and Madras High Court.

Silk weaving industry

1649. SHRI RAM NARESH YADAV: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the silk weaving industry in Varanasi is facing extinction; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to revive this industry and help the weavers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The problems of silk weavers of Varanasi have been discussed with State Government of Uttar Pradesh, Weavers' Societies and other Central/ State Agencies. In order to help the weavers the following steps have been taken by the concerned agencies:—

(i) Karnataka Silk Marketing (KSMB) has opened an additional silk yarn depot at Varanasi.

(ii) KSMB has offered to sell silk yarn on credit to 3 Apex Co-op. Societies on the guarantee of Government of Uttar Pradesh.

(iii) Uttar Pradesh Handloom Development Corporation is implementing a Varanasi silk project under which about 4000 silk weavers are being covered for supply of yarn and procurement of finished products from them.

(iv) State Government of Uttar Pradesh and National Handloom Development Corporation have been advised to consider feasibility of setting up Silk Twisting Plants at Varanasi.

Besides, out of 36 tonnes of raw silk imported by the Central Silk Board so far during 1988, about 19 tonnes has been allotted to the agencies in Uttar Pradesh.

Use of synthetic materias in government buildings

1650. SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a policy decision not to use any timber and allied materials in Government buildings but to opt for synthetic materials in order to protect forest products and trees; and